

Mission lines up China trade

S.B. County agency council to explore more international trade opportunities

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A group of business representatives netted \$65 million in potential business when it traveled to China on a trade mission Nov. 11-19.

Although executives signed no contracts, discussions and negotiations, sales and sourcing leads resulting from the trip could bring \$65 million to the Inland Empire over the next five years, said Paul Herrera, spokesman for the San Bernardino County Economic Development Agency.

Participants in the trip included Mission Packaging in Ontario, E-Cyclers in Upland and Rhino Machine and Engineering in Rancho Cucamonga.

The trade mission visited Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Hong Kong and participated in more than 130 meetings.

Guangzhou and Shenzhen are part of the Pearl River Delta in southern China where about 80,000 manufacturing plants are situated, said Moises Cisneros, manager of international trade for the economic development agency.

Job creation

Mission Packaging likely will grow and hire more workers to meet its international trade demands, owner Phil Martinez said in a release.

"When we start doing more and more business, say in Guangzhou, we're going to have to have someone to handle that full-time because of the follow-through that's required," Martinez said.

"Then we're going to have to work with a local logistics company that can bring the material into a warehouse and distribute it for us. Or we're going to have to move into a bigger facility to handle it and we're going to have to buy a truck and hire a driver and add other people to handle the workload."

Mission Packaging produces shipping and retail boxes.

Calls to Mission Packaging seeking further comment were not returned.

"This has been the smoothest and biggest success," Cisneros said.

"We're hoping to go to China again next year."

Cisneros plans to host two more trade missions next year, one in China and one in another country. "We're looking closely at India," he said.

No dates have been set.

"We're going to propose an international trade business plan to the county

supervisors in the next couple of weeks," Cisneros said Nov. 21.

That plan will include a proposal for a private-sector trade advisory council, Cisneros said.

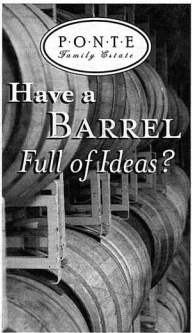
Privately owned businesses will sit on the council and discuss concerns and problems facing the trade community.

"We want feedback from businesses so they can help us shape the international trade program," Cisneros said.

The Nov. 11-19 trade mission to China was the first mission organized and led by the county of San Bernardino.

"People have this stigma about outsourcing and that it takes jobs away, but the other side of the coin here is that we could lose the whole industry instead of a few jobs," Cisneros said. "So having an open global mindset is important. [Outsourcing] is about being able to stay competitive and in business."

"I wish I had been invited to take this trip three years ago," Martinez said in the release. "It would have made a big difference in what I could have done." ■



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